

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 22, 2009

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We are grateful for your leadership in fostering security and stability in the Middle East and are committed to working in partnership with you toward achieving a two-state solution to the Israeli and the Palestinian conflict. As you advance this vital initiative, we hope that you will work to ensure all U.S. economic relief assistance for the West Bank and Gaza reaches the Palestinian people.

Following the outbreak of the 2008-2009 Gaza conflict between Israel and Hamas, the U.S. provided approximately \$65 million in emergency humanitarian assistance for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. As you know, the House recently passed and the President will soon sign the War Supplemental Act of 2009, which includes millions of dollars in funding for economic relief assistance for the West Bank and Gaza. These funds are channeled through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and through international organizations such as United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the International Committee of the Red Cross. They are urgently needed to support education and social services, as well as to help rebuild the homes and buildings destroyed in the conflict.

We have followed with growing concern the media reports that this emergency economic relief assistance for the West Bank and Gaza is not reaching the Palestinian people. Specifically, Oxfam International identifies basic goods including clothes, school supplies, wheelchairs, baby toys, window glass and other construction materials that are not permitted to enter Gaza. Oxfam International does confirm that Israel is allowing humanitarian aid such as food and cooking gas into Gaza.

The restriction on transportation of all humanitarian aid, specifically construction materials, to Gaza has severe implications for the implementation of the humanitarian and reconstruction programs. John Ging, Director of the UNRWA in the Gaza Strip, has said, "It's hard to fathom that after all of the outpouring of concern and empathy with the plight of the people here during the January conflict, that months later they are still living in the rubble of their former lives."

We remain confident that the U.S. emergency assistance will help Palestinians rebuild their lives. The free flow of humanitarian aid and reconstruction supplies will ultimately

foster increased stability in the region while reducing the potential for extremism and violence. We urge you to work to ensure that aid in the form of construction materials and other basic goods in addition to food aid reaches the Palestinian people.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



Lois Capps
Member of Congress



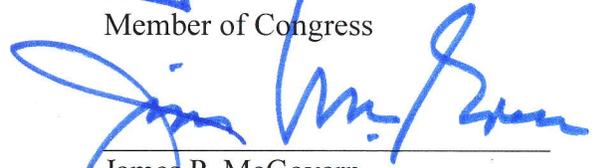
Bob Filner
Member of Congress



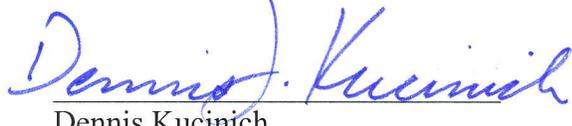
James Moran
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



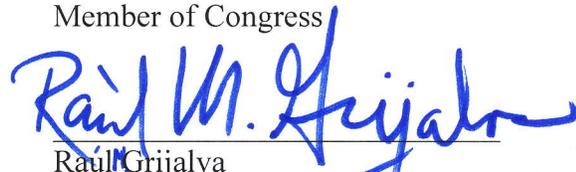
James P. McGovern
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Dennis Kucinich
Member of Congress



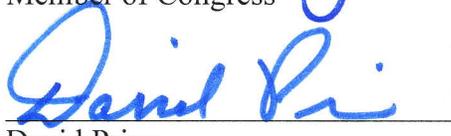
Nick Rahall
Member of Congress



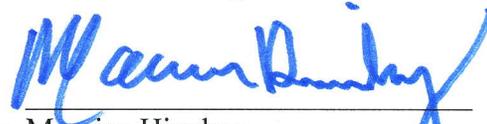
Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress



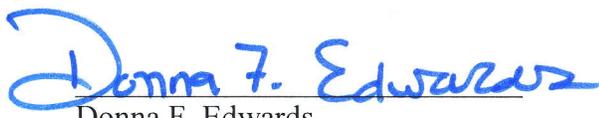
Michael Capuano
Member of Congress



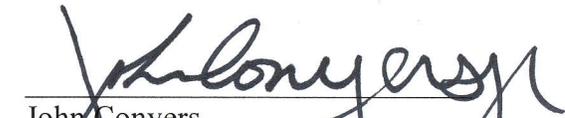
David Price
Member of Congress



Maurice Hinchey
Member of Congress



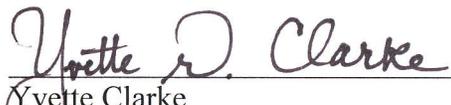
Donna F. Edwards
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John Conyers
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John Olver
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Yvette Clarke
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John Dingell
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Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



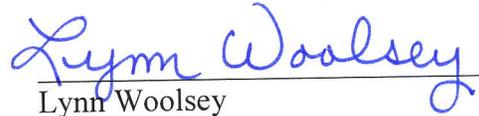
Brian Baird
Member of Congress



Darrell Issa
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William Delahunt
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Lynn Woolsey
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Andre Carson
Member of Congress



Sam Farr
Member of Congress